



Fact Sheet

Culture of Lawfulness

Merida Initiative Culture of Lawfulness (COL) programs aim to instill a sense of individual responsibility among Mexicans to uphold the rule of law, with the larger goal of reducing crime and corruption. COL projects promote civic participation, efficient public services, and government transparency. To that end, the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) works in the following areas, in partnership with civil society, public institutions, media, and the private sector:

Instilling a Culture of Lawfulness in Mexican Youth

- COL education is now part of 29 states' school curricula. During the 2011-2012 school year, 17,780 teachers in 7,645 schools gave COL instruction to 698,898 students. Schools that teach the COL course report fewer fights, better communication between students, greater knowledge about the rule of law and bullying, and more respect for school regulations.
- A web portal, <http://www.culturadelalegalidad.org.mx/>, provides information about COL programs to almost 14,000 visitors a month. The portal's sponsor also promotes COL through social networks, with 25,571 followers on Facebook and 4,592 followers on Twitter.
- This academic year, 77 high school students are participating in "Jóvenes en Acción," a youth exchange focused on community service. The students spent five weeks in the United States developing leadership skills. Afterwards, they returned to their communities to implement service projects addressing issues such as social inclusion, bullying, and drug abuse.
- In 2013-14, a Monterrey-based civil society organization will create college-level COL course materials, suitable for inclusion in university curricula across Mexico.

Increasing Government Transparency and Accountability

- A Mexican NGO placed citizens' watch booths in 54 Mexico City district attorney's offices, and staffed them with observers who provided information to people reporting crimes. The observers surveyed over 14,500 people in 13 months about the services they received, and reported the results. The project improved customer service and decreased corruption in many locations.

Training Law Enforcement and Public Servants to Promote the Rule of Law

- The Secretariat of Public Security (SSP) has committed to creating an institutional culture that provides incentives for employees to show integrity, respect for citizen rights, and support for the rule of law. A 40-hour COL course has been taught to over 12,000 patrolmen and officers.
- The Federal Electric Company (CFE) has given COL training to over 8,300 employees, and the Secretariat of Public Administration (SFP) has taught 3,100 federal employees in 88 offices.
- At the state level, 15 master trainers have prepared over 90 instructors to teach COL principles to police. Over 8,500 officers in Baja California, Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, and Coahuila have received COL education. In addition, the Mexico City Attorney General's office has provided COL education to 2,800 prosecutors and investigators.

Coordinating Culture of Lawfulness Programs with the Private Sector, Civil Society, and Media

- In partnership with the Mexican government, the cities of Puebla, Ensenada, and Aguascalientes are implementing a "multi-sector" COL project, which aims to create city-wide COL campaigns by coordinating efforts with the private sector, civil society, and media.